

An apple a day? Four general practitioners (GPs) on the top health give some advice



We asked four doctors for the medical advice they think we could all benefit from.

Avoid processed food

“I recommend everybody to stay away from processed food as much as they can, and to eat as fresh as possible,” says Dr Ahmadi. That means avoiding frozen or pre-prepared foods – anything that’s ready-made and just needs to be heated up – as well as things like sausages.

“One of the main issues with processed food is the materials they add to the food to keep it fresh or fresh-looking or fresh-tasting – colours, flavours, chemicals,” Ahmadi says. He explains that those additives can cause liver damage and high cholesterol.

He advises patients to cook as much as they can and look at the nutritional labels.

Exercise five times a week

Going for a walk where you’re comfortable the whole way is good but not great, says Dr James Stewart. “Something I live by and truly believe in is to do some exercise first thing in the morning,” says Dr James Stewart. He says the current health guidelines recommend exercising five times a week, for 30-40 minutes per session.

He says regular exercise will help with weight control, reduce your cardiovascular risk – and do good things for your brain.

“The main benefit from exercise, I feel, is to do with mental health. You get a good release of endorphins and serotonin when you exercise and that leads to an improved mood and sense of wellbeing. So if you exercise in the morning, you’ve got a nice buzz that sets you up for the day.”

Practise meditation and mindfulness

Dr Kelly-Anne Garnier believes that “mediation and mindfulness is well known to reduce the impact of stress,” she says. “It’s something that is evidence-based and effective.”

“Skin diseases, auto-immune diseases would be worse with stress. Even things like the risk of heart attack and stroke increase with it,” she says. “The other impact of stress is sleep disturbance, and we know sleep disturbance is bad for us for all sorts of reasons. And an increased stress level puts us at risk of anxiety, depression and burnout.”

How to get started with meditation? “It is as simple as breathing, becoming aware of one’s breath and trying to step outside of oneself and observe oneself,” she says.

Source: <https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2020/oct/05/an-apple-a-day-four-gps-on-the-top-health-advice-they-give-and-follow>